

Special Area Management Plans & Wetland Preservation

City of Superior, Wisconsin

More than 86% of undeveloped land in the City of Superior is composed of wetlands. In an effort to acknowledge the functional importance of wetlands while encouraging responsible development, the City has agreed to administer select wetland fill permits according to a prescribed set of rules developed through a multi-agency approach.

The City recently secured its second set of General Permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a Special Area Management Plan (known as SAMP II). The SAMP II provides predictability for landowners and developers, plans for mitigating wetland losses, objective criteria for eligible wetland fills and increased efficiency in the process.

Superior's SAMP programs include development of diverse, high quality wetland creation, restoration and enhancement projects in the City and Douglas County to compensate for unavoidable impacts. The SAMP I and II represent the City's ability to partner with federal agencies to allow for development while balancing recourse protection.

Example of SAMP Implementation

In 2007, the City of Superior in partnership with Douglas County preserved in perpetuity 442 acres of property adjacent to Allouez Bay, one of the largest freshwater marshes in Lake Superior. The project area, comprised of approximately 153 acres owned by the City and approximately 289 acres owned by the County, features some of the highest quality wetlands and uplands remaining within the City limits. While a covenant permanently preserves the property, it remains in City and County ownership.

The preservation project was designed to compensate for unavoidable wetland impacts permitted under a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP I), administered by the City to assure that development takes place in an environmentally responsible manner. The city of Superior, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environment Protection Agency, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have agreed that the project meets the City's obligation for compensatory wetland mitigation. The project generated an 8:1 ratio for wetland preservation and 10:1 for upland preservation.